IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of annotating an image, said method comprising the steps of:

displaying the image and a plurality of icons, each icon being associated with one or more predetermined items of metadata;

selecting at least one of ~~said~~ the icons depending on at least one subject rendered at a location within ~~of~~ the image;

linking the predetermined items of metadata associated with the selected icon with a description of the location of the subject within the image;

and

storing the linked metadata ~~associated with said selected icon~~ and the description as an annotation of ~~the subject of~~ the image.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said selecting step comprises the sub-steps of:

~~selecting at least one of said icons depending on said at least one subject of the image;~~

dragging the selected icon to the image; and

dropping the dragged icon on the subject of the image~~; and~~

~~detecting the subject based on the position at which the icon is dropped wherein said storing step stores the metadata associated with the dropped icon as an annotation of the subject of the image~~.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 6~~2~~, wherein ~~said~~ the bounded region is formed based on an analysis of pixels of the image ~~detecting step extracts the subject from the image based on the dropped position when the dragged icon is dropped on the image~~.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 3, wherein ~~said subject is extracted based on~~ the analysis includes an analysis of the colour information of ~~the dropped position~~ the pixels of the image.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~3~~6, wherein ~~said~~ the bounded region is of ~~detecting step extracts~~ a predetermined size~~d region of the subject based on the dropped position and said storing step stores the metadata associated with the dropped icon as an annotation of the region of the subject~~.

6. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~2~~1, further comprising the step of forming a bounded region within the image ~~constructing regions~~

about the locations at which ~~said~~ the subject is rendered in said image, the bounded region being configured to substantially surround the subject.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~6~~2, wherein ~~said dragging step further comprises the steps of: dragging the selected icon to the image; and emphasizing the~~ a bounded region under the dragged icon is emphasized.

9. and 10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~9~~6, further comprising the step of extracting a part of ~~said~~ the image based on the ~~bounding box~~ bounded region.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of displaying the extracted part of ~~said~~ the image.

13. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~9~~6, wherein a size of ~~said~~ the bounded~~ing box~~ region is determined automatically.

14. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~9~~6, wherein a size of ~~said~~ the bounded~~ing box~~ region is changeable by a user.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the metadata stored as the annotation of the subject is displayed upon selecting ~~said~~ the subject in the image.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

providing a list of metadata; and

associating the list of metadata and the plurality of icons.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 16, wherein ~~said~~ the list of metadata is provided from a database.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said storing step ~~stores~~ includes storing the metadata as the annotation of the subject of the image by using a tag indicating an association with ~~said~~ the image.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 18, wherein the metadata associated with the subject of the image is stored in an XML file.

20. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of e-mailing at least the image to at least one e-mail address based on the metadata associated with the image.

21. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of replacing the default icon by the icon generated based on the subject of the image.

22. (Currently Amended) A computer program for a computer, comprising software code portions for performing a method of annotating an image, said program comprising:

code for displaying the image and a plurality of icons, each icon being associated with one or more predetermined items of metadata;

code for selecting at least one of the icons depending on at least one subject rendered at a location within the image;

code for linking the predetermined items of metadata associated with the selected icon with a description of the location of the subject within the image; and

code for storing the linked metadata and the description as an annotation of the image ~~the steps of any one of claims 1 to 21~~.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium storing a computer program, wherein said computer program comprises software code portions for performing a method of annotating an image, said program comprising:

code for displaying the image and a plurality of icons, each icon being associated with one or more predetermined items of metadata;

code for selecting at least one of the icons depending on at least one subject rendered at a location within the image;

code for linking the predetermined items of metadata associated with the selected icon with a description of the location of the subject within the image; and

code for storing the linked metadata and the description as an annotation of the image ~~the steps of any one of claims 1 to 21~~.

24. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for annotating an image, said apparatus comprising:

display means for displaying the image and a plurality of icons, each icon being associated with one or more predetermined items of metadata;

selection means for selecting at least one of ~~said~~ the icons depending on at least one subject ~~of~~ rendered at a location within the image;

linking means for linking the predetermined items of metadata associated with the selected icon with a description of the location of the subject within the image; and

storage means for storing the linked metadata ~~associated with said selected icon~~ and the description as an annotation of ~~the subject of~~ the image.

25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 24, further comprising:

means for dragging the selected icon to the image and dropping the dragged icon on the subject of the image~~; and~~

~~detection means for detecting the subject based on the position at which the icon is dropped, wherein said storage means stores the metadata associated with the dropped icon as an annotation of the subject of the image~~.

26. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~25~~29, wherein ~~said~~ the bounded region is formed ~~detection means extracts the subject from the image based on the dropped position when the dragged icon is dropped on the image~~ based on an analysis of pixels of the image.

27. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 26, wherein ~~said subject is extracted based on~~ the analysis includes an analysis of the colour information of ~~the dropped position~~ the pixels of the image.

28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~25~~29, wherein the bounded region is of ~~said detection means extracts~~ a predetermined sized ~~region of the subject based on the dropped position and said storage means stores the metadata associated with the dropped icon as an annotation of the region of the subject~~.

29. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~25~~24, further comprising means for forming a bounded region within the image ~~constructing regions~~ about the locations at which ~~said~~ the subject is rendered in ~~said~~ the image, the bounded region being configured to substantially surround the subject.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~29~~25, wherein a bounded region under ~~a~~ the dragged icon is emphasized.

32. and 33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~32~~29, further comprising means for extracting a part of ~~said~~ the image based on the ~~bounding box~~ bounded region.

35. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein said display means further displays the extracted part of ~~said~~ the image.

36. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~32~~29, wherein a size of ~~said~~ the bounded~~ing box~~ region is determined automatically.

37. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~32~~29, wherein a size of ~~said~~ the boundeding ~~box~~ region is changeable by a user.

38. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein ~~said~~ the metadata stored as the annotation of the subject is displayed upon selecting ~~said~~ the subject in the image.

39. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 24, further comprising:

means for providing a list of metadata; and

association means for associating the list of metadata and the plurality of icons.

40. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 39, wherein ~~said~~ the list of metadata is provided from a database.

41. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein said storage means stores the metadata as the annotation of the subject of the image by using a tag indicating an association with ~~said~~ the image.

42. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the metadata associated with the subject of the image is stored in an XML file.

43. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 24, further comprising means for e-mailing at least the image to at least one e-mail address based on the metadata associated with the image.

44. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 24, further comprising means for replacing the default icon by the icon generated based on the subject of the image.

45. (New) A method according to claim 6, wherein the description includes a location of the bounded region within the image.

46. (New) A method according to claim 6, wherein the description includes a size of the bounded region.

47. (New) A method according to claim 6, wherein the bounded region is formed at a location at which the selected icon is dropped on the image.

48. (New) A method according to claim 3, wherein a size of the bounded region is determined based on the analysis.

49. (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein only the linked metadata and the description are stored as an annotation of the subject of the image.

50. (New) The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the description of the bounded region includes a location of the bounded region within the image.

51. (New) The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the description of the bounded region includes a size of the bounded region.

52. (New) The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the bounded region is formed at a location at which the icon is dropped on the image.

53. (New) The apparatus according to claim 26, wherein a size of the bounded region is determined based on the analysis.

54. (New) The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein only the linked metadata and the description are stored as an annotation of the subject of the image.